

# PARISH OF BISHOPSTOKE

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly 2014 held at the Methodist Church, Bishopstoke on Tuesday 1 April 2014 commencing at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllr Anne Winstanley, Chairman Bishopstoke Parish Council  
Cllrs Brown, Harris, Lyon, McKeone and Toher

Four members of the public and PCSO Blyth were present

**In attendance:** Mr P J Storey OBE, Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council  
Mrs C Taylor, Assistant Clerk to the Council

### **1. Welcome by the Chairman**

Cllr Winstanley extended a warm welcome to all present at the nineteenth Bishopstoke Annual Parish Assembly.

### **2. Presentation on The Mount - Yesterday and Tomorrow**

Mr Chris Humby from the Bishopstoke History Society gave a presentation on the history of The Mount site from when it was a private house and gardens, highlighting the backgrounds of the various owners, and ending with a description of the site's use as a hospital and care centre especially for those suffering with tuberculosis.

This was followed by Mr James Cobb from The Anchor Trust which was in the process of developing the site into a retirement village with facilities for the elderly and those needing varying degrees of support. He emphasised that the village when completed in a couple of year's time would be the flagship development of The Anchor Trust and every effort would be made to integrate the village and its facilities into the Bishopstoke community.

### **3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Cossey.

### **4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 14 March 2013**

Copies of the minutes were available to those present at the Assembly and were on the Parish Council website. Proposed Cllr Brown, Seconded McKeone, **RESOLVED** unanimously that these be accepted as a true record of the 2013 Assembly.

### **5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 14 March 2013**

There were no matters arising.

### **6. Chairman's Address and Annual Report**

The last year has been really eventful for Bishopstoke Parish Council. Working backwards: Today we take over responsibility for the play area and much of the open space on the Brookfield estate, following doing the same a year ago for Glebe Meadow, and before that for the play areas and open spaces at Otter Close, Templecombe Road, Sayers Road and Stoke Common at the top of Church Road. We know our local contractor, Green Smile, will do an excellent job at Brookfield as they have, not only at the other recreation areas mentioned above, but also the Cemetery, closed churchyards and allotments that the Parish has taken over from Eastleigh Borough.

We have just completed refurbishment of the Stoke Common and Templecombe play areas which has much improved the play value of these two play areas. They are now definitely proving popular with local residents. The funding came from grants from the devolved budgets of both our local County Councillors, a substantial contribution from Eastleigh Borough of developers' contributions they held and the remainder from Parish Council reserves.

We now have a fully functional Parish Office, now with electricity and telecoms. It is on Riverside next to the Memorial Hall and as well as being manned either by the Clerk or Assistant Clerk, Monday-Thursday, for several hours to deal with parishioners' queries, is used for all Parish Council meetings. This has brought to an end our long relationship with the Methodist Church who hosted the Parish Council for nearly 18 years with only this meeting, The Parish Assembly, the remaining link. I'd like to reiterate our thanks to the Methodist Church for their hospitality over the years. No longer can Councillors study pre-school artwork for light relief in meetings! Our own Parish Office, in a location reasonably easily accessible to parishioners has been an ambition of mine since part way through our first term of office around 1998!

At the beginning of September we had an official opening of the Shears Mill building, which again was the culmination of another long-term ambition. This work, completed by the local traditional building company, J Bruno Construction and Restoration, continues to receive admiring comments. The funding for this project, undertaken on behalf of the Bishopstoke History Group, came from a mixture of Lottery money as part of the Itchen Navigation Project, grants from our County Councillors, Eastleigh Borough who provided the display boards, and the Parish Council. This started off as a Millennium Project and finished as our Diamond Jubilee Project.

Last year also saw the Parish Council take to FaceBook. Notices of our meetings and press releases are posted on FaceBook as well as the noticeboards and in the local papers.

As well as these new initiatives the usual Parish activities have continued.

We have continued our regular support of village groups and other external organizations operating in the village with our grant programme. In the last year, these have included St Mary's Church (new heating), Memorial Hall and Bishopstoke Players (electric upgrade), New Hope Church (minibus), Bishopstoke Guides (fencing), Asian Welfare and Cultural Association (Eastleigh Mela), Sebastian's Bereavement Support, Street Pastors, HomeStart, Open Sight & CRUSE (running costs).

Our major support goes to Bishopstoke Carnival both by helping to cover costs and also in providing administrative support from our Assistant Clerk. We congratulate the Carnival Group on their very successful 2-day Carnival in 2013 and for continuing the Duck Race started in 2012 for the Centenary Carnival. Here I must strike a sad note and give massive credit and thanks to Glynis Elliot, Chair of the Carnival Group for many years, who played such a part, with support from her husband Lee, in making Bishopstoke Carnival a success with a great reputation on the carnival circuit. Glynis lost her battle with cancer last November and will be greatly missed. As a result, the Carnival Group has asked the Parish Council to take over responsibility for the Carnival to ensure the continued existence of a Bishopstoke Carnival and this has just been agreed.

We continue our partnership with Hampshire Police to provide a dedicated PCSO to work in Bishopstoke. We have agreed to support a SpeedWatch scheme in Bishopstoke and are still trying to recruit the team of volunteers needed for this.

We have continued our support of YZone: the Brookfield Youth Centre, where the Management Committee (BPC, FOHHPC & EBC) is working on additional ways to generate income, including appropriate hirings of the building, to overcome the reduction in funding following the County Council's withdrawal from standard youth work. .

Our Armistice Service at the Memorial at 11am on 11<sup>th</sup> November has increasing numbers attending every year. We have added a plaque to commemorate those who died in service of our country in addition to the official Rolls of Honour.

Our travel token scheme to assist those unable to use buses and with no access to a family car continues.

We have just had the resignation of Parish Councillor Barry Hansell who reluctantly had to give up on account of his deteriorating health. Barry was the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest serving councillor having been co-opted around 1999, during the 1<sup>st</sup> term. I'd like to give thanks to Barry for his quiet and thoughtful contributions during his time on the Parish Council.

Looking forward, we anticipate an extension to Bishopstoke Cemetery, much needed with an estimate of only 3 years space for new burials, and more allotments to deal with our waiting list, as well as some more recreation areas from the 2 Local Plan development sites on Church Road and Stoke Common Road.

I'd like to end by thanking our staff, Peter Storey and Cheryl Taylor, without whose dedicated hard work none of the above contributions to the well-being of Bishopstoke residents would have happened.

And finally, may I remind you that all Council meetings are open to the public and we very much hope that you will continue to attend.

Cllr Anne Winstanley

## **7. Presentation of the Audited and Published Return for the year ended 31 March 2013**

The key to local government accounting is the annual return. This document contains an analysis of the year's accounting together with explanations on variations year on year in excess of 15%. It goes to the external auditors for examination and signing off. I am required to present to you at this Assembly the latest signed off Annual Return which is for the year ending 31 March 2013 - somewhat historical. However, copies are available in the room should you wish to peruse them.

I think a short review of the finances for the year that has just ended is of more interest and where we go from here financially. We have ended the year in a healthy financial position with a cash holding of some £175,000. This is deliberate as much of this has been ringfenced specifically for some more new bus shelters, meeting the costs of upgrading more play equipment, the conversion of arable land to a new Cemetery as the present Cemetery will become full within the next 3 or so years and the provision of some new allotments where the waiting time for some years has been in excess of 2 years. A full programme of capital expenditure continues around the community. Aside from this, I can generalise and state that what came into the coffers over the past year went out with in excess of £80,000 going back directly into the community at large in addition to the new parish office and renovating Shears Mill which now provides a fitting reminder of Bishopstoke's historical past and a feature entrance to the conservation area.

The 2013 - 14 Precept of £136,000 included an element to enable us to take ownership for Glebe Meadow from the Borough Council with a corresponding reduction in the Borough's council tax. As a result of changes in the way the Government now funds work in the local community, the new year's Precept is only £130,996 and this recognises the transfer of the Brookfield play area and open space, again with a corresponding reduction in the amount paid by you to the Borough. However, we will now receive a top up grant paid to us by the Borough Council amounting to £13,537 giving us a total income yield, as it's now known, of £144,533, an increase of £8,533 on last year which you will see on your council tax bills expressed as 6.5% but remember 3% of this is a reduction in what you pay to the Borough. The remaining 3.5% equates to an increase of only £2.56 per annum on a Band D council tax payer and this will enable us to meet our obligations and many of your aspirations in the year to come.

My conclusions are that the Council's finances are on a sound footing and that we comply with all statutory and other regulation in their management. Thus we remain well-placed to continue to improve upon the standards of service provided and look forward to the new challenges of 2014 - 15. Thank you.

## **8. Public questions**

Mr Roberts reminded Councillors how long the Fair Oak Road railings had been awaiting repair and how it would be advantageous for them to be painted white, as in years gone by, to make them more obvious to those passing by. Mr Humby supported this. Cllr Toher suggested that if white painting was not possible then reflective discs should be affixed to illuminate them for passing drivers' benefit.

*There being no further questions, Cllr Winstanley thanked everyone for attending, declared the Assembly formally closed at 8.55pm and invited all present to enjoy the light refreshments provided.*